

Rainforest Restoration Manual for south-eastern Australia

by Bill Peel

Publisher: CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Victoria 2010. Paperback and CD, 352 pages.
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This book is excellent. There are a number of typos but that easily is overlooked because of the sheer volume of information provided and the careful thought that has gone into presenting this step by step manual for rainforest restoration. In the section 'How to use this Manual' it is claimed that

By using both the Manual and its supporting documents, you can aspire to be a 'rainforest restoration chef', rather than just a cook: being empowered to develop your own tools and techniques that can be adapted to the idiosyncrasies of your site or the social milieu in which you operate.

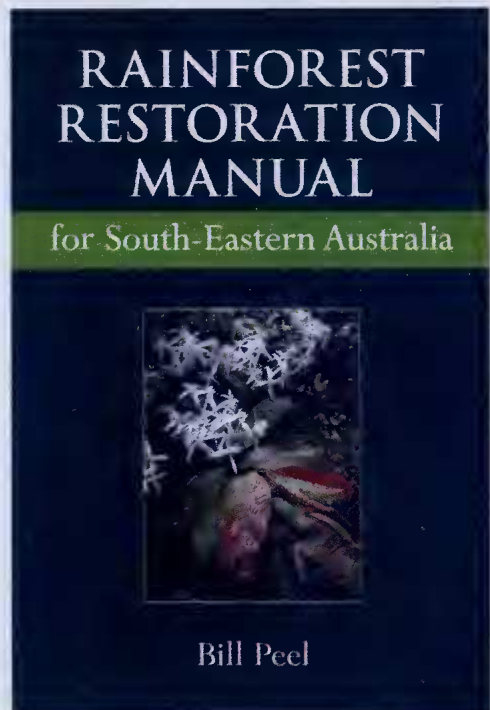
This is not a false boast. As well, it can be used as a template for restoration of other vegetation types, in that the concepts underlying restoration procedures can be translated to other situations.

Chapter 1 provides the necessary background information for anyone contemplating rainforest restoration. It explains the unique character of rainforests, their threats and what to do about them. It also explains the scientific basis for ecological restoration in a clear and easy to understand manner. Chapter 2 leads the reader along a journey towards understanding their rainforest and 'applying first aid'. At this stage of the book, the reader already will have become aware of the massive amount of research that serves as its foundation, which instills belief that rainforest restoration is possible. Then follow the ten steps for rainforest restoration.

Each step is presented in a separate chapter and includes:

- Objectives: what you will be able to do, know or achieve at the end of each Step;
- Summary: key points;
- Relevant reading;
- Further assistance: suggestions of where to go should you require help.

Step 1 (Chapter 3) details how to determine whether rainforest ever occurred at a given site and provides a series of decision trees to illustrate the logical sequence used in development of the Rainforest Divination Tool. Step 2 enables the detective know-how to elucidate the Ecological Vegetation Class and Floristic Community that is or was present. Again, each task is explained succinctly and unambiguously. Step 3 explains how to determine what a site requires for recovery and explains the ecological brakes that could be preventing rainforest recovery and what adaptive management responses might need to be applied. Some useful case studies are provided. Step 4 makes you stop and take



a realistic look at the task and your abilities, and whether or not you need some expert help. Step 5 provides a key for selecting your rainforest restoration method, then continues to give a full account of each method. Step 6 examines what resources and money are needed. Step 7 provides the means for carrying out a site assessment and developing a project management plan. It also gives ideas on funding applications. Step 8 deals with project implementation. This is very detailed and covers: landscape and site assessment, site preparation and seed collection; plant propagation, planting and maintenance; various techniques used depending on restoration method, resources available, season and limitations that might arise. Step 9 explains how to measure success and Step 10 explains how to do an annual health assessment, what is needed to maintain the restored rainforest. It concludes with a reminder that ecological management

also requires anticipation of new threats and changes that might need to be accommodated.

At the back of the manual is a CD that contains supporting material with 32 appendices, a propagation manual for 735 rainforest plants of the region, an illustrated glossary and resources for teachers. Planting guides also are provided.

Bill Peel is an expert on rainforests – and he's not bad at writing manuals for their restoration. Throughout the book, his knowledge, passion and enthusiasm are evident and contagious. He has produced an excellent piece of work that is suitable for all. It is well written, well put together and easily understood. I highly recommend the book.

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Dingo

by Brad Purcell

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Dingo raises serious questions in my mind; questions not, unfortunately, on the subject of dingoes, but on publishing standards and editorial responsibility. To be blunt: as it stands, this book should not have been published. I don't question the value or originality of Purcell's work, or doubt that it could provide the basis of a popular book about dingoes, but this isn't it.

The Australian Natural History Series already includes Laurie Corbett's *The Dingo in Australia and Asia*, published in 1995. Given the lapse of time and the developments in molecular systematics, in particular, a new treatment of the species is clearly desirable. But the likelihood of *Dingo* improving your understanding of the animal is minimal.

The book, based on Purcell's 2010 PhD thesis, a study of dingoes living in a 220 000-ha area

of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, is seriously flawed in at least three respects. First, there is reason to doubt the adequacy of both Purcell's dingo expertise and his general biological knowledge. It is clear, for instance, that his grasp of evolutionary biology is shaky. And you have to wonder when he writes that the dingo's canine teeth are for 'mastication and shearing flesh' (they aren't) or that the dingo has large 'main teeth' (which would they be?) or that kangaroos have an 'ephemeral' rather than a femoral artery. He notes the divergence of opinion as to whether or not dingoes bark, but makes no attempt to resolve the question: surely a dingo 'expert' should have a view?

Second, a large part of the book is devoted not to Purcell's own work, but to reviewing the literature, particularly that bearing on the